IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows, substituting any amended claim(s) for the corresponding pending claim(s):

Please cancel Claim 13, without prejudice.

Please add new Claims 15-18.

1   1. (Unchanged)   A method of converting text to speech comprising:

2   receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a

3   suffix;

4   for each textual unit,

5   locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6   appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1   2. (Unchanged)   The method of claim 1 wherein one said textual unit in said list is

2   indicated as not having an associated speech sample in memory and said method further comprises:

3   passing said indicated textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;

4   receiving a speech sample converted from said indicated textual unit from said secondary text

5   to speech engine; and

6   appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

1   3. (Unchanged)   The method of claim 2 wherein each said speech sample in said

2   memory comprises a processed recording of a voice talent and said secondary text to speech engine

3   comprises a phonetic text to speech engine based on said voice talent.

1   4. (Unchanged)   The method of claim 1 wherein a consecutive plurality of said textual

2   units in said list represent a whole word, said method further comprising:

3   for each textual unit in said consecutive plurality of said textual units, locating an associated

4   speech sample in said memory;

5   creating a speech unit by splicing together said plurality of associated speech samples; and

6   appending said speech unit to said output signal.

1   5. (Unchanged)   The method of claim 4 further comprising, after said splicing,

2   processing said speech unit to remove discontinuities.

1   6. (Unchanged)   A method of pre-processing a text file comprising:

2   receiving a text file;

3   parsing said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one of a word,

4   a prefix or a suffix; and

5   for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units corresponds

6   to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, adding said stored textual unit to a list.

1   7. (Unchanged)   The method of claim 6 further comprising, for each one of said parsed

2   textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units does not correspond to one of said stored textual

3   units,

4   marking said parsed textual unit as being out of vocabulary; and

5   adding said marked textual unit to said list.

1   8. (Unchanged)   The method of claim 7 where said marking comprises pre-pending a

2   character to said textual unit.

1   9. (Unchanged)   A text to speech converter comprising:

2   means for receiving a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a

3   prefix or a suffix;

4   for each textual unit,

5   means for locating an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6   means for appending said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1   10. (Unchanged)   A text to speech converter comprising a processor operable to:

2   receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a

3   suffix;

4   for each textual unit;

5   locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

6   append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1   11. (Unchanged)   A computer readable medium for providing program control to a

2   processor, said processor included in a text to speech converter, said computer readable medium

3   adapting said processor to be operable to:

4   receive a list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a prefix or a

5   suffix;

6   for each textual unit,

7   locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

8   append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

1   12. (Unchanged)   A text to speech conversion system comprising:

2   a text file pre-processor operable to:

3   receive a text file;

4   parse said text file into textual units, where each said parsed textual unit is one

5   of a word, a prefix or a suffix and

6   for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units

7   corresponds to a stored textual unit in a vocabulary of textual units, add said stored textual units

8   to a list;

9   and a textual unit processor operable to:

10   receive said list of textual units, where each said textual unit is one of a word, a

11   prefix or a suffix;

12   for each textual unit, of said list:

13   locate an associated speech sample in a memory; and

14   append said associated speech sample to an output signal.

13.   Deleted.

1   14. (Unchanged)   A data structure including a field for a textual unit and a field for

2   a speech sample associated with said textual unit, where said textual unit is one of a word, a

3   prefix or a suffix.

1   15. (New)   The data structure of claim 14 further comprising a field for a phoneme

2   that said textual unit starts with, and a field for a phoneme that the textual unit ends with.

1   16. (New)   The method of claim 7 further comprising:

2   passing said marked textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;

3   receiving a speech sample converted from said marked textual unit from said secondary

4   text to speech engine; and

5   appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

1   17. (New)   The method of claim 8 further comprising:

2   passing said marked textual unit to a secondary text to speech engine;

3   receiving a speech sample converted from said marked textual unit from said secondary text

4   to speech engine; and

5   appending said converted speech sample to said output signal.

1   18. (New)   The text to speech conversion system of claim 12 wherein:

2   said pre-processor is further operable to:

3   for each one of said parsed textual units, if said one of said parsed textual units does

4   not correspond to one of said stored textual units, marking said parsed textual unit as being out of

5   vocabulary and add said marked textual unit to said list; and

6   said textual unit processor further comprises:

7   a secondary text to speech engine operable to receive said marked textual unit and

8   convert said marked textual unit into a speech sample.